



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

St Hild's College CE Aided Primary School

St Hild's College CE Aided Primary School have had Investing in Children membership for a number of years, and Mrs Katsambis, the head teacher, is committed to ensuring that the school continues to listen to the children in order to improve the school.

For this evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Matthew, Ellen, Eleanor, Ryan, Jade, Fiona, Luke and Jonathan.

Evidence of Dialogue & Change

School Council

The *School Council* was democratically elected. Ryan told me, **"We have an election, anyone who wants to be a councillor can make a speech."** Eleanor went on to say, **"It can be a rap, a poem or a song about what you'd do if you were a councillor, like promising things like report back every week."** Ryan added, **"What we'd help to do, and listen to everybody."**

Ryan went on to tell me, **"It's a private vote, every class goes into the hall, you go to the box, write on a piece of paper, and vote for a boy and girl from each class."**

Eleanor told me that the newly elected councillors were **"announced in assembly."** The old school councillors pass on to the new councillors, and then in the first meeting of the new school council, the previous councillors attend to pass on what they have been doing.

The council votes for the roles of chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Each class holds class council meetings on Friday when people can raise the issues that they think are important and that the school council should be looking at and the councillors can share what has happened in the meetings. Ryan told me, **"We take all the things we've done in the meeting and talk about it with the class, the class has a vote and decides, and that goes back to the school council."**

Behaviour

The children at St Hild's have decided that they wanted to focus on *behaviour* this year. Eleanor told me, **"We've always had good behaviour, but not brilliant."** The whole school has been involved in coming up with suggestions as to how to ensure that pupils behave well.

The school has tried out a number of ways to encourage good behaviour which has been suggested by the pupils. Eleanor told me, **"If you're naughty in a lesson you have to stay in at break, if you're good you're allowed to go on the field."** She went on to tell me what the children had decided about fighting. **"We don't want school to be scary, it's not for fighting, it's for playing and learning. If you start fighting, you get sent to Mrs Katsambis, and then they get your parents in."**

Jonathan told me how the whole school has found out the final decisions made at the school council using everyone's ideas. **"All members of the council have done an assembly to talk about behaviour, rules and privileges. We talked about the rules."**

The school has a buddy system which they feel supports them with looking out for good behaviour as well as helping the children who feel lonely. To encourage good behaviour on the

playground there is an award for 'Playground Pupil of the Week', which is chosen by the buddies, and there is a 'Dinner Ladies Award'.

The issue of behaviour has really been important to the children and they have devised a system to try out. The children decided there should be warnings. If someone gets two warnings they should have time out, if it gets to four warnings they should see Mrs Katsambis. Ryan told me, **"It's taken a while to get to this, not everyone agreed, then something happened where everyone felt 'hang on a minute', then they wanted to give it a try."**

Eleanor went on, **"It's still a trial, but it's making it better for everyone, it gives them a chance to calm down."**

The system is being tried on the yard. Jonathan told me, **"There's a green card for good behaviour, a yellow for time out and red is a warning."**

Although the children at St Hild's have concentrated a lot on finding ways to combat bad behaviour they have a reward system that they are very happy with. Ryan explained, **"We have vouchers, if you're good, like sitting smart quickly, a voucher goes on a chart, if you get ten vouchers you fill the chart, and a letter goes home to say how good you've been. When you fill five charts you get a bronze award, then silver, gold, platinum, ruby, opal, topaz, emerald then sapphire."**

Pupil Voice

Ellen is part of the *Pupil Voice Group* and she talked to me about a presentation that children from St Hild's did at a big conference. **"A group of children from green class that do work on pupil voice did a presentation about children learning. We took photos of lots of ways children learn. Not just learning in school, learning in lots of places, like trips to Beamish and when they play. We did in front of adults and professionals."**

Ellen was very proud of the presentation the children did, and when I talked to Mrs Katsambis she said that all the children were fantastic.

SNAG

The *School Nutrition Action Group* (SNAG) talks about the food in school. Jonathan told me, **"No-one liked the dinners, but we did like chips and pizzas, but we're a healthy school."**

The school arranged for someone to come from the school meal provider to talk to the children in the SNAG. Jonathan told me, **"Me and Luke were there. The lady asked what we like and what we don't like. We got to see the menu. We have different days now, like Chinese, American, autumn days and that sort of thing."**

Luke went on, **"We have something healthy then we have a treat like chocolate cake or jelly."**

Sensory Garden

An area near the entrance of the school is being developed into a sensory garden and work is well underway, using plans that the children contributed to. This work is part of the Grounds Project that the school runs. Ryan told me, **"We've got work on allotments going on, and we've got flower tubs. We wanted them because it looked a bit boring."** The children are looking forward to seeing the garden finished.

The children I met were keen to tell me about *Smiles*. They are a group of children who helps people in school. The Smiles group members wear a badge and help any children who have started in the middle of the year and help them settle in and find friends. Everyone thought it was a really good idea to have the Smiles group.

It is clear from meeting the children at St Hild's C of E Primary that they feel that they are listened to by the staff at the school and that they can make changes to the way their school runs.

In past years the children have been focused on many different aspects of their school. However, this year has clearly been a time to focus on behaviour. It seems that everyone has felt it is a worthwhile area to improve and they hope that everyone will feel the benefit of the system they are trying. They are all very sure that if people find that it doesn't work they can try again to find a way to make it work.

The children are clearly involved in making decisions and they feel they are listened to, and when I asked if they felt their school should receive year of Investing in Children membership everyone agreed, and so with their endorsement I would like to recommend another year of Investing in Children membership, well done!

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